# Chappelear, Edith McCoy 2003

## Edith McCoy Chappelear Oral History 2003

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Edith Chappelear
Oral History Interview

July 29, 2003

This is an interview with Edith McCoy Chappelear, daughter of NIH director George W. McCoy, on July 29, 2003, at her home in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The interviewers are Dr. Victoria Harden, the NIH historian, and Dr. Caroline Hannaway, consultant to the Office of NIH History.

Victoria Harden: Now, Mrs. Chappelear, you were showing us, as we get started, your father's baby book.

Edith Chappelear: My brother's.

Harden: Your brother's baby book.

Chappelear: The reason I have this is that it'll give you a clear picture. Now, for instance, this is the family on Molokai.

Harden: Oh, yes.

Chappelear: That's my mother, my father, my aunt, my brother, and I, and we all rode horseback on Molokai.

Hannaway: That's a wonderful picture.

Harden: That is a wonderful picture. I hope you'll let us borrow it and copy it.

Chappelear: And we have -- these are all pictures on Molokai. My understanding is we had a large house there, and Chinese and Japanese servants, and people would come and visit because it was very isolated, you know, and it was on a leper colony, so that friends would come from Honolulu and spend the long weekend or the week, and they were all doctors. I don't know if they were Public Health Service doctors, may have been.

Harden: Let's back up and put this in the context. Tell me when you were born and where you were born.

Chappelear: Well, I have his history, which you may have. He was born in 1876, and then the first significant thing I have is he became interested in pharmacy and worked in the pharmacy in Highland, Pennsylvania. Do you have all the . . .

Harden: Only that he came from Pennsylvania, went to the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.

Chappelear: Yeah. Well, he went - the interesting thing was that there he saw this lovely young girl and he said, "That's going to be my wife," and they all teased him because when he went to San Francisco, after he'd finished medical school, she joined him there and they were married.

Harden: And her full name?

Chappelear: Edith Miller, Edith Portia Miller.

Harden: Edith Portia Miller.

Chappelear: Right.

Hannaway: Was she working in the pharmacy?

Chappelear: No, no. She was just a girl from the town.

Harden: In the town.

Chappelear: Then he went to Northwestern. Do you have that?

Harden: Mm-hmm.

Chappelear: You probably know the year, which I don't. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Do you have the dates?

Hannaway: They have that.

Chappelear: Do you have it right?

Hannaway: Nineteen eighteen.

Chappelear: And he went into practice in, I think, I'm not sure, I think it was Bristol, Virginia. Do you have that?

Harden: No, no, I don't.

Chappelear: He went into practice with a Dr. Butler, and they had lots to eat but no money.

Harden: And this was in Virginia?

Chappelear: Dr. Butler went into the Navy, and he went to the Public Health Service, and Dr. Butler ended up as an admiral in the Navy, so they made a wise decision at that point and the Butlers were friends of theirs for as long as they both lived.

Harden: Do you know Dr. Butler's first name?

Chappelear: It may come back to me. I've forgotten it, and then, what year did he join the Public Health Service?

Hannaway: Nineteen hundred.

Chappelear: Nineteen what?

Hannaway: Hundred.

Chappelear: Yeah, well, okay. And he was in, went immediately to San Francisco, and I'm not sure if I'm right about this or not, but I think he was in San Francisco off and on maybe until 1908, but during that time, he went to the Philippines. Now, I don't know what he was doing in the Philippines.

Harden: I know what he would have been doing. As a young officer . . .

Chappelear: Were they examining him before they left?

Harden: Yes. They had all sorts of quarantine duties, and they would be rotated through a lot of different posts.

Chappelear: He went to the Philippines, China, and Japan. In 1908 -- and my dates are all questioned -- he was back in San Francisco.

Harden: That's right.

Chappelear: And my brother and I were both born there, my brother in 1908, and I was born in 1911.

Harden: Well, and he was head of the plague laboratory in San Francisco from 1908 to 1911.

Chappelear: I didn't know that.

Harden: Plague was one of the diseases he became famous for investigating, and so he headed up the plague laboratory of the Public Health Service.

Chappelear: Then, was it 1913 that he went to Molokai?

Harden: I have 1911.

Chappelear: I don't think it was 1911 because I was born in 1911, and I think that I was a couple years older, but I may -- I'm almost sure. If you look in the baby book, you'll see pictures, I think when we were still in San Francisco. And I don't know about this, but my mother, on Molokai, worked in the laboratory, and she either isolated something to do with leprosy -- I don't know what she did. But leprosy was always his love. He wanted to find out more about leprosy. And they stayed on Molokai until 1915, I think. Is that right?

Harden: Yes, that is correct, at least that's what we have.

Chappelear: All right. Came back here . . .

Harden: Now, wait. Just stop and talk about that. What was it like to be a child on Molokai?

Chappelear: I don't have any real recollection.

Harden: At all?

Chappelear: Well, I know you know that we had the Japanese nurses and we all rode horseback. We didn't go anyplace. And I was not brought in contact with people there except for guests, and I know that when we came to Washington -- this I just heard -- I was afraid of people, and we moved to a house in what was a new section of Woodley Park, and Dr. Goldberger lived there, Dr. Kerr lived there, Dr. Perry -- I don't know. There were about six doctors. They were all new houses. And Dr. Kerr's daughter, Helen, was about five years older than I was.

Harden: I know her, too.

Chappelear: Do you?

Harden: I have met her.

Chappelear: Helen died three or four years ago, but she was my great friend. She made me comfortable with children. She was older. But we had pictures of me with her from that time on till I knew her when she died. And her parents, I knew them very well. Dr. Kerr was at the Bureau, wasn't he?

Harden: Yes.

Chappelear: Whatever we called the Bureau.

Harden: The Public Health Service. It was a bureau.

Chappelear: Right. And he was there. But Dr. Kreel [sp.] lived down the street, Goldberger about three doors up. I remember the Goldbergers having us for dinner, and she was from New Orleans.

Harden: Yes.

Chappelear: She had gumbo, and I had never tasted anything like okra. I must have been seven or eight, and I thought -- I'll never forget. I thought it was very slimy.

Harden: Did they have children at that time?

Chappelear: Yes.

Harden: Do you remember her children?

Chappelear: Yes.

Harden: The boys?

Chappelear: Well, I think the older boy was Pharoah. I know my father said the Goldbergers got mixed up with biblical history, and I think there was a Mary and Joseph. I'm not sure. Those may not be correct.

Harden: There's a new biography out on him.

Chappelear: Is there? Who wrote it?

Harden: Alan Kraut who's a professor at American University.

Chappelear: He just didn't know them, did he?

Harden: No, but he went and talked to all the family.

Chappelear: Are they still around?

Harden: The oldest son is in Texas, and I think the daughter is still alive. But he followed up with all the children. He talked to as many as he could.

Chappelear: My father. Now, let's see if we got him back. Yes, he came back to that laboratory, and I'm sure you've seen that old laboratory.

Harden: Yes. I'd love to get inside.

Chappelear: Past the Naval Hospital, in there. It didn't smell very good because all the animals were right there in the basement. Have you ready any of Paul de Kruif's books? Do you have those? Because he describes that laboratory.

Harden: The little red brick building on the hill.

Chappelear: Right. And I think in my father's office, it was one room, and Dr. Dyer I think was in the other half .

Hannaway: They shared an office.

Chappelear: Right, yes. And his secretary was a Miss Novell [sp.]. I remember her, too, because you couldn't touch her pencils. I was careful about that. Now, one of the first things he did here -- these are just personal things -- he established the Journal Club. The doctors met every other week to discuss the journal of the AMA, and they all came like on a weekend night, you know, and I think all the medical people came to those meetings to discuss all those things. He was on the National Board of Medical Examiners. I don't know who else was on it, but they were about, I guess six or eight people only. They sat at our dining room table and corrected those handwritten examinations, and if anyone was in danger of failing, they all had to read or at least three to agree before they would fail anybody. So that was an awful job. He was on the Pharmacopeia Revision Committee, and I haven't any idea what they did.

Harden: They reviewed the drugs. This was before the Food and Drug Administration. And he also was regulating viruses, the production of antitoxins and vaccines. That's because the laboratory had that responsibility. And we saw one article when he retired. The AMA was thanking him for all his work in regulation.

Chappelear: He went to Europe fairly often, like every, maybe every year or every other year. I don't know. I went with him, I think, in 1928, and he was treated as though he was a very important person. He was entertained by the Royal Society in London. And I was telling Mary Lou, there was somebody from Hitler, the commissioner of health. Now, I don't know if Hitler was in power then or if he was just somebody else. But he took us to his castles in Venice, and I just finished telling Mary Lou, we went at twilight and we took the way through the Black Forest, and the twilight, and silhouette. He said, "What a beautiful time." And I've always remembered him. He was somebody, I think like Raleigh. And then -- again, I don't know the date -- but I think it was 1940. Is that when they moved out to Bethesda?

Harden: They moved over a series of years, from 1939 to '41.

Chappelear: Well, he resigned and went down to New Orleans.

Harden: Thirty-seven, yeah.

Chappelear: He said he was a scientist, not a politician, and the NIH now needed a good politician, and I'm sure he was right about that. But, again, his first love was leprosy, and he went down to New Orleans because they had leprosy there, and he was trying to do an epidemiological study, but when the war broke out, the dean of the medical school at LSU went into the military, and they asked him to act as dean of the medical school, which he did through the rest of the war. Now, that's a summary.

Harden: Well, let's talk about some of the people and some of the events. You spoke to me on the telephone about the flu epidemic in 1918.

Chappelear: The what?

Harden: The influenza epidemic.

Chappelear: Oh, yes, I did. He went to San Francisco for that, I know. And I don't know what he did, but one of the medals he had was from the city of San Francisco for the influenza epidemic, and I'm sure he -- I don't know what anybody did to stop the influenza epidemic, but anyway, he was recognized for that.

Harden: Do you remember what the, what happened here in Washington and whether any of the other physicians in the laboratory were involved?

Chappelear: I haven't the faintest idea. I know that -- I think I told you my mother was upset. She said, "Why does he have to go to San Francisco when we're all sick here?" because we were all in bed with influenza.

Harden: Interesting.

Hannaway: You had the flu yourself?

Chappelear: Yes, everybody had it. What year was that?

Harden: Nineteen eighteen.

Hannaway: My father had that, too.

Chappelear: Yeah. Well, everybody had it. It really was a dreadful epidemic.

Harden: One of the things that is in some of his obituaries, people said he was very active in opposing the anti-vivisectionists and anti-vaccinationists. Do you remember any comments?

Chappelear: I do. He took me to a hearing down at the Capitol, the anti-vivisectionists were talking about cruelty to animals and that every animal should have a right to live out its life in its favorite habitat. And Dr. Spencer, I think it was, was there, and he said, "Now, what about the cootie? His favorite habitat is on you and me. So what about that?" and that, of course, broke the meeting up for a while. But he took me to that particular meeting because he wanted me to see how government worked or didn't work about things like that.

Hannaway: Was this a House hearing?

Chappelear: I guess.

Hannaway: A committee of the House?

Chappelear: It was a committee of either the House or the Senate. I guess it would have been the House.

Hannaway: What age were you when that happened?

Chappelear: I don't know. I must have been eight or nine. I wasn't old enough to really understand. I didn't like them working on those animals much either.

Harden: Of course. Do you remember any other major philosophical or scientific issues that he felt very strongly about, like the anti-vivisection movement.

Chappelear: He had a strong feeling about lots of things. He was exceedingly philanthropic. You know how much money the Public Health Service made, but he certainly wanted to see the other people have what they needed. And just the matter of talking about tips, he said, "Remember, it doesn't mean much to you and it means a lot to them." But a lot of things like that. He was a truly good human being.

Harden: But what about any scientific ideas that he felt very strongly about that were controversial?

Chappelear: I don't know.

Harden: Can you remember anything like the anti-vivisectionists? I did not know whether there were particular controversies that he talked a lot about at home.

Chappelear: He didn't talk much about any of these things at home like that, but it would come up sometimes. But I can't think of anything now.

Hannaway: Was your mother was involved, as you think, in Hawaii, working.

Chappelear: She was always involved to some extent, you know, in whatever he was doing.

Hannaway: So they would discuss things between the two of them that you would overhear when you were a child?

Chappelear: But I say, you have to remember my memory is a child's memory up until, well, until before he went to New Orleans, but I wasn't paying much attention to what he was doing. Were you familiar with his, the controversy about cancer research?

Harden: No. Let's hear about that.

Chappelear: Well, there's a paper here written by Michael Shimkin. You can make a copy of it. But he wanted to expand research on cancer, I don't remember whoever it was, but anyway, they decided they would not pursue that. And he had written some papers on neoplasms and tumors in wild rats, tumors in brown squirrels.

Harden: That's right. I knew he had done that when he was doing the plague.

Chappelear: But the government decided they would not pursue that.

Harden: What year was that, that paper?

Chappelear: This is the Board of Federal Cancer Program of 1910.

Harden: Nineteen ten? Now, that's very interesting because I did not realize it was so early. He had done -- what I remember reading is that he dissected something to the tune of 100,000 rats fighting plague in San Francisco. And as a part of the careful dissection, he also would note when he found a rat that had a tumor, and so this is where the tumor business and the neoplasms and everything came up. But I didn't realize that somebody actually had suggested that they do cancer research that early.

Hannaway: Yeah, it was; 1909 was the tumors in wild rats.

Harden: Good. I would like to get a copy of that paper.

Chappelear: He had a really nice sense of humor, a very quiet sense of humor, but the rats, he always liked to say he got into Cosmos Club on the back of a rat.

Harden: Right. There is a portrait of him in the Cosmos Club, you know.

Chappelear: There is. However, it's no longer on display.

Harden: Yes, it is, but it's up on the third or fourth floor.

Hannaway: They moved it.

Chappelear: Have you seen it?

Harden: I have seen it.

Chappelear: I mean recently.

Harden: Well, I saw it a year or two ago. I was chair of the History Committee at the Cosmos Club, and so we started looking for all these things, and I was especially interested in the NIH people.

Chappelear: A little story about that. The artist was one of the WPA artists. My father didn't want his portrait painted for anything in the world. I mean, that's the last thing he wanted. And the man who -- was his name Leonard Howard[sp.]? called my mother and said, "Would you mind inviting me and my wife to dinner? I'd like to see Dr. McCoy when he isn't posing." So he came to dinner and he thanked us greatly and then went out and painted the portrait because he said realized he couldn't stand the thought of having his portrait painted. He didn't want any recognition.

Harden: Well, you know, there is the portrait at NIH also. Now, which portrait was this? The one for the Cosmos Club? Do you remember?

Chappelear: The one for the Cosmos Club is one after he did the one that's at NIH. He did that for my mother.

Harden: I see.

Chappelear: Or I guess the officers gave it to her when he retired. I'm not sure.

Harden: But this is the one. That would not surprise me because in the obituary. Charles Armstrong wrote the obituary for *Science* when your father died, and his highest praise was for Dr. McCoy's handling of young investigators, how he supported young investigators to give them the freedom and protect them from having to do administrative work and this sort of thing, and he, and yet was very demanding that they do rigorous research. And for this, he was beloved, is what I was trying to get at. And he named a number, several people who were, had benefitted the most, and I wanted to run their names by you and see if you had any special thoughts about them. Joseph Goldberger was one of them, and you've commented on him, and Dr. Armstrong himself.

Chappelear: Right. Well, the Armstrong's, they were great friends. They had a farm out here in Bethesda. It's probably totally populated now with high-rises, but they had a farm and they used to have all this wonderful fresh produce that they would bring in, and they were just very close friends. They had a lot of close friends. I think people did more in those days.

Hannaway: Yes.

Chappelear: Now, life was more formal. Most of these people never called each other by their first names.

Harden: Oh, really?

Chappelear: Yes, " Dr." Lee, "Dr." Armstrong.

Harden: Even in an informal setting?

Chappelear: Right. They would still call them Dr. So-and-So pretty much. And people called. They didn't just drop in, you know. They called on people.

Hannaway: Yes, visiting.

Chappelear: You'd be at home on a certain Sunday or not, and somebody else, and on Sundays we went and called them. There was somebody -- I don't know who they were -- by the name of Fox that lived down here in that apartment. That's right down here off Western Avenue. I was a wonderfully secure child. I was afraid to go see the Foxes out of their den. But I don't, I haven't run across his name. I told you about Dr. Francis and his can opener, didn't I?

Harden: Tell me for the recording.

Chappelear: He had one of these little can openers, you know, that you open the can that way, and used to pull it out of his pocket and say, "This is going to ruin the American woman."

Harden: This is Dr. Edward Francis, right?

Chappelear: Yes. They all sat -- you may know it, but they all sat at that laboratory in one room. It had a shelf around it, with their microscopes, and they shared one right after another, which now would be considered absolutely atrocious, but they must have had a great opportunity to share and talk back and forth and all that sort of thing.

Harden: James Leek.

Chappelear: He was our -- everybody in the family's best friend, including mine. He was just wonderful. And he worked on polio?

Harden: I think so.

Chappelear: I think so, too, but I don't know.

Harden: I have to go back and check.

Chappelear: I had surgery, had my appendix out when I was a little girl, and he was in the operating room. He came when both my children were born, and his children said, "He didn't do that for us." He was a very close friend.

Hannaway: How had your father met most of these people? Was it through being in the Public Health Service together?

Chappelear: Oh, I think so, yes. I think their lives were very much confined to the people that they worked with, had the same interests. They probably talked shop all the time.

Harden: You mentioned Dr. Spencer a little while ago, and I presume you mean Roscoe Roy Spencer, who was later head of the Cancer Institute. But he was a **rickettsiologist.** He worked on Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Chappelear: That doesn't sound like the right name. I can almost think of her first name, Adele.

Harden: I would have to check that. But Dr. Parker was mentioned in Dr. Armstrong's list, Ralph Parker. Does that recall anything?

Chappelear: I don't remember him.

Harden: He was from Montana. He worked at the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. And that's why I wondered if, when you said Spencer, if it was . . .

Chappelear: I don't remember hearing that. Do you have a Dr. Lloyd, Oliver Lloyd?

Harden: No, but tell me about him.

Chappelear: Don't know much about him. His wife -- her father was president of Ecuador, I guess, and he was one of the doctors in the laboratory, but they were good friends. I don't know what he did. I was trying to think. I really didn't work very hard at it, or I looked more at that Paul de Kruif's book because that list of names of the doctors and some of those names. The Public Health Service women then had a bridge club, and they used to meet at places like a restaurant down here was then the Brook Farm.

Hannaway: Yes.

Chappelear: And they'd meet there and they'd set the tables for them so they could have lunch, and then they stayed and played bridge.

Harden: Oh, wow.

Chappelear: And I'll tell you what I do remember. I do remember discussions over whether the dentists' wives and the engineers' wives could be included in the wives' luncheon bridge group, or if it had to be a commissioned officer.

Harden: And what was the decision?

Chappelear: I'm afraid they stuck with the commissioned officers.

Hannaway: The other wives were not allowed.

Chappelear: No. They were a very close group, those people.

Harden: Yes, they were.

Chappelear: I mean the men and the women.

Harden: What about the female bacteriologists, the female Ph.D.'s who worked in the lab, like Ida Bengston and Alice Evans?

Chappelear: I remember Miss Evans.

Harden: Yeah. She spoke very highly of your father because she got ill with undulant fever when she was studying, and this is before the time of workmen's compensation, so that when she had used up her sick leave, she wasn't getting paid even though she was sick with an infection she caught in the laboratory. And your dad apparently helped her do everything she could do to keep herself afloat, and she was eternally grateful to him.

Chappelear: He felt that women were quite as capable as men, which was a very rare.

Harden: Well, he hired the first woman in the laboratory. That was Ida Bengston in 1916.

Chappelear: Yes. Well, he felt that women, you know, had perfectly good brains and could use them. Well, that was unusual.

Harden: That's very interesting within your family.

Chappelear: I was certainly never discriminated against because I was a girl child.

Hannaway: Did he encourage you to study medicine?

Chappelear: He'd have loved to me go to medical school.

Harden: And your brother did.

Chappelear: He did.

Harden: He was a physician.

Chappelear: That's Mary Lou's father.

Harden: Uh-huh. Did you all associate very much with Dr. Hugh Cummings' family?

Chappelear: Mrs. Cummings was just a lovely surgeon general's wife. She entertained beautifully. She had the children come and assist her. And I remember going there to a tea or something and I was astonished because we stayed. She had maids there that washed the silver. But we stayed while she counted the silver to see if the silver was all still there. But they were very elegant people, the Cummings, and very, very -- she was a very good friend of my mother's.

Harden: So the social lines -- again, it was within the Public Health Service.

Chappelear: Oh, it was. I mean, that's really practically what their lives were.

Harden: I certainly got that impression reading the Goldberger book, too.

Chappelear: But isn't it true still in the military, aren't pretty much in the military . . .

Hannaway: Yeah. Well, it used to be. I think it's more and more disappearing as a way of life.

Harden: I suppose unless you're stationed somewhere and isolated and you're thrown together into the group.

Hannaway: They didn't interact with the people at Hopkins.

Chappelear: At where?

Hannaway: At Hopkins.

Harden: They sent people. People left the hygienic lab and went to Hopkins. Dr. Maxie. Did you know Kenneth Maxie? Does that name ring a bell?

Chappelear: Uh-uh.

Harden: Well, he did, and Dr. Armstrong did, actually. He went to Hopkins when he left the lab.

Female: So a long way to go to socialize, especially because they spent so much time working. There wasn't that much time, and it would have been a long distance.

Harden: Right.

Chappelear: I forgot Mrs. Cummings and her teas. They lived over on California Street in what was then and still is a very elegant apartment. The first surgeon general, I think, when we were here was Dr. Blue. Is that right?

Harden: Well, he wasn't the first surgeon general. He was the first one that you all would have known, yeah. He became surgeon general in 1911 and was surgeon general until 1920, I think it was, and so when Dr. Cummings came in. So that's right. He had a big car, as I understand, a big red car he liked to drive.

Chappelear: Dr. Kerr. Do you have him in any place?

Harden: I'd like to get to Dr. Kerr.

Chappelear: But Mrs. Kerr was very slow at learning to drive, but she would drive and stop at the corner, and the children would get up and look up and down Connecticut Avenue to see if anything was coming.

Harden: Connecticut moved more slowly at that time. Well, this brings us to one of the two errors that I wrote about your father at one time, and I want to get it on the record so that we have this straight so the next historian will have it.

Chappelear: Did I call you?

Harden: That was the first time you called me, yes.

Chappelear: I laid you out.

Harden: One time you called me and laid me out, but I deserved it, so it's all right. That was when I said he couldn't, he never learned to drive, which I took from another source that had said, and you said absolutely not. Of course he learned to drive.

Chappelear: Yes. He drove.

Harden: What kind of car did you all have?

Chappelear: A Model T, and then they turned that in and got a lovely Buick touring car. But, of course, you had to have a very warm blanket.

Harden: Because it was open.

Chappelear: Because there was no heat in the cars. I mean, you can't imagine what life was like in those uncomfortable days.

Harden: Well, and the other thing, I suggested that he was very conservative politically, and that was wrong. He said he was much more liberal.

Chappelear: I don't know. I mean, I don't know what I was thinking about. I can just tell you that we had no vote in the District, and we had three commissioners, so we had no discussion of politics. But at one point when I was again about eight or nine, they had an election in the school for president even though we had no votes. So I came home and asked my father if I was a Democrat or Republican, and he said, "You are whatever you want to be." But my family had voted the Democratic ticket since it took three months to count the Republican majority in Pennsylvania.

Harden: All right.

Hannaway: So he gave you a hint there.

Chappelear: Gave me a hint.

Hannaway: Of the family leanings politically. Where did you go to school in Washington?

Chappelear: John Eaton, which is in Cleveland Park.

Harden: Still there.

Hannaway: Did you study science at all?

Chappelear: No, no. I went to John Eaton; I went to Western High School; I went to George Washington; I went to American University; I went to Catholic University. I'm a social worker. That's as near medical as you need to be.

Harden: Well, I agree with you. This is why I do history instead of medicine.

Chappelear: I didn't want to carve up things. I think that was my objection.

Harden: But, so you have lived your entire life here in the Washington area?

Chappelear: Well, my husband was in the Foreign Service. We were in London and Vienna and overseas for about eight years.

Harden: Well, let's back up and get this straight, then. When you graduated from high school, did you go straight into college and then marry?

Chappelear: I didn't marry till 1940. I had a master's from American University and a master's from Catholic University. I have an M.A. and an M.S. Don't ask me why.

Harden: In what fields?

Chappelear: Social work.

Harden: Both in social work.

Chappelear: No. The one from G.W. was in economics.

Harden: Oh, how interesting.

Chappelear: But I met someone there, who was a social worker on staff, and I didn't know anything about it, and it sounded great. And I certainly enjoyed being a social worker.

Harden: They're very interesting.

Hannaway: And where did you do most of your work?

Chappelear: What?

Hannaway: In which area did you do most of your work?

Chappelear: Well, I started at Children's Hospital and I worked at Children's. But this is dated. The University of Pennsylvania had a very good social service department, and they had organized there an Institute for the control of syphilis. Up until that time, they had been putting syphilis carriers in jail, and we developed this institute to train social workers, public health nurses, doctors, anybody, to work on getting them to bring their contacts in and not to put them in jail, and that was a revolutionary idea.

Harden: Did you have a Dr. Parran?

Chappelear: Oh, I did. Dr. Parran was the first one that said the word syphilis out loud.

Harden: Right and syphilis is identified with him the way leprosy is with your father. I mean, in the attempt to control it.

Chappelear: Right.

Harden: Did you all have good luck doing this?

Chappelear: I think so. Certainly, not arresting people was progress. But when I worked at Children's -- the reason I got into it, when I worked at Children's Hospital, I was working with eye conditions, and also the venereal disease section and all these kids with syphilis and gonorrhea, and it was just dreadful the number of children that it affected. Syphilis was hereditary, but gonorrhea was given to them.

Harden: That's right.

Chappelear: And so, I mean, it was something that really needed a lot of attention, and I think it's much better now. I mean, I don't know. I'm not around. I don't hear about it.

Hannaway: I think in certain populations in certain cities, it's at quite a high level of infection. I was wondering. You had mentioned your husband was in the Foreign Service, but you've mentioned going with your father to Europe.

Chappelear: Right.

Hannaway: And you went to London, obviously.

Chappelear: Right.

Hannaway: Was at the Royal Society, and you went to Germany. Did you go to France or any other European countries that you remember?

Chappelear: Everyplace we went, we were -- that's why I say, he wouldn't be in that kind of position now at all. I mean, he was a world figure, and he was entertained everyplace he went by the top medical people.

Hannaway: Right. Was he giving lectures at these societies?

Chappelear: Sometimes.

Hannaway: Sometimes.

Chappelear: Sometimes he was. I don't know what he was doing, but I think he was examining the laboratories that wanted to import things.

Harden: Yes, yes. That would have been part of the . . . If they wanted to sell vaccines or antitoxins to the United States, they also had to get a license, and they had to get the section of the Hygienic Lab that approved those would, they'd have to inspect them.

Chappelear: Now they have a bunch of kids out to inspect them, I suppose. I don't know. But he wouldn't accept anything from anybody. People would send fruit and candy and all this stuff, and he wouldn't let it be landed. But a Chinese doctor brought him a little cup in a case, sort of, and he said he thought it was worthless, so he took it because he didn't want to hurt the man's feelings. Well, it's a lovely 16th century cup, which I still have.

Harden: Wow!

Chappelear: But he would not accept anything.

Hannaway: Afraid it would seem like an encouragement to….?

Harden: But also that carried over, as I understand it, into the lab. He -- this is, I believe, also from Dr. Armstrong's obituary -- that he was very generous with buying scientific instruments and reagents and what have you, but no rugs on the floor, no fancy desks.

Chappelear: I'm sure.

Hannaway: Fancy decorations.

Harden: Right. And I assure you, we still don't have fancy desks and fancy decorations. We do not waste your tax money.

Chappelear: He had a very wonderful disposition. In my life, I don't think he was ever angry with me for anything. Well, that's wonderful, isn't it?

Harden: It certainly is.

Chappelear: Because I certainly gave him plenty of reasons.

Harden: Do you -- what do you think your father considered his greatest scientific legacy when he was director? Was it leprosy or was he proudest of the laboratory?

Chappelear: It was an emotional love. I think he just hoped to find something that would be useful, and, of course, I don't think he did. He found the leprosarium and set them up.

Harden: What about the laboratory as a whole? Was he proud of what all the folks were doing that were in the laboratory?

Chappelear: I don't know, but I wouldn't imagine so. I think he'd just think they were doing what they were supposed to do.

Harden: After he retired, you all, or he moved. I'm trying to get my time sequence, whether you were still at home or in college in 1937, when he retired.

Chappelear: After he retired, I was -- I guess I was still in graduate school.

Harden: But you stayed in Washington.

Chappelear: I did.

Harden: You didn't move to Louisiana.

Chappelear: I did not go down to New Orleans when they went.

Harden: But they did live in New Orleans then.

Chappelear: Then they came back here after he retired, and he knew a dermatologist, Dr. Stolar [Robert Stolar], that he was very fond of who had a clinic at Georgetown, and I had worked in the Social Service Department at Georgetown, so he put on a white coat and went to the dermatology clinic, and I don't think anybody knows he did that. But he loved it because you never know what's going to come into a dermatology clinic, and he knew tropical medicine.

Harden: Right.

Hannaway: Right.

Chappelear: Most of these people didn't. So he was there just like one of the students, I think. I'd forgotten it, but I had a friend who worked at Georgetown, a good friend of mine, and she stayed with my family after I left home, and she's moving. Long story, but she told me she has letters from my mother and photographs and all this sort of thing. And she said, "And I was thinking of your father coming down to Georgetown and putting on a white coat and going around examining patients."

Harden: What else did he do while he was, when he came back up here?

Hannaway: This was the early '50s now.

Harden: Right. We're in the late '40s, early . . . It was 1948 he came back from Louisiana? Nineteen forty-seven. He retired in 1947, is what I have, so that's when he came back.

Chappelear: I don't think he did anything special. I mean, he had a lot of papers that he went over and was doing things like that.When did he die?

Harden: Fifty-two.

Chappelear: Fifty-two. That's what I thought. He didn't have much time.

Harden: He had a heart attack when he was in New Orleans, did you say?

Chappelear: Yeah, he did.

Female: Yeah. We have a letter somewhere that he wrote. He happened to be in a lecture hall when he had it, and so he had written a letter describing the heart attack.

Harden: A cardiologist was in the audience.

Female: Yes.

Harden: Only physicians do this, you know, write about their experience and take themselves to certain subjects.

Hannaway: And he was saved by the cardiologist being there?

Female: Well, the understanding is that he attributed it to it. It was a very good place to have a heart attack.

Chappelear: When he died, he had a heart attack, and he was at the hospital, and Dr. Leek was not taking care of him, but he was going down there all the time. And my mother -- they didn't want her to go down in the beginning, and Dr. Leek called and said I could bring her down, and I was getting ready to take her down and Dr. Leek called and said he had died between the time he went to the phone and we got there. I have no idea. He was as thin as he could be, but he loved fat meat, so he committed suicide with that meat.

Harden: Oh my.

Female: He ate meat and he lived to a ripe old age.

Chappelear: Did he eat fat meat? I can't stand it. But they said when he went to the South, he always ate seasoning and they always had a piece of fatback.

Harden: Absolutely. I grew up in the South. My parents both -- well, I never liked it, but they did, and so I'm very familiar with it. Is there anything else that we need to go over in terms of his career that you think of?

Chappelear: You know, it's so long ago.

Harden: And we're all feeling our way here, so . . .

Chappelear: He was an absolutely fantastic father. But when I went up to the University of Pennsylvania, when I say people now wouldn't know him, but the doctors at the University of Pennsylvania all came down to see me because they knew who he was. And I was just astonished. I couldn't see why anybody cared. But apparently they all knew about him.

Hannaway: They all knew him.

Chappelear: Right.

Hannaway: Do you have anything else in your . . .

Chappelear: Well, I just thought if you want to see what it looked like, this is my brother's baby book, and it has -- Mary Lou has that; I wouldn't have it. Now, that's at Molokai, I think. But if you'll look through it, you'll see. And that's Molokai. My mother is there and my Aunt Virginia. That's Aunt Virginia and that's my mother, my brother, and me, and that's how we got around.

Hannaway: This was quite a sizable house.

Chappelear: Oh, I think it was a very big house. You know, I think they considered it a hardship, and I think there was a laboratory there.

Hannaway: In the house or separately.

Chappelear: Right.

Female: Separate. I don't know if you're familiar with the geography there. But it's down at sea level or thereabouts, but the only way to get to it is down a [unintelligible], which is a really steep cliff, and which is why they were always on horses, because now they have built some steps to get down. But it's probably a mile or so down, switchbacks...

Chappelear: I read this morning when I pulled Molokai up on the computer and found it's a resort for gays.

Hannaway: I guess.

Harden: Let me stop the tape recorder while we're looking through this so that we'll know. I will say thank you in case we don't turn it back on. But if we do, we'll just pick up. We're picking up again the interview and Mrs. Chappelear is telling us about her father's background. Go ahead.

Chappelear: They went from France to Holland.

Harden: They were Huguenots, French Huguenots.

Chappelear: They became, were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, and my father went to the Dutch Reformed Church the rest of his life. There's one here. I don't know where it is. He and my brother went there, and my mother and I went to a Methodist church.

Harden: I have French Huguenot background on both sides. I have been learning about one Huguenot church in the United States, in Charleston, South Carolina. It's apparently one that's still active, I do believe. The name McCoy is not Huguenot, though.

Chappelear: No. It's Scot. But that was from my grandmother's family. Wasn't it, Mary Lou? Mary Lou knows the genealogy better than I do. The name was Dubair [sp.] and they changed it to.

Female: That was your mother's.

Chappelear: Was it my mother's? Okay. But he's the one that went to the Dutch Reformed Church. He had great regard for his mother, and she went to the Dutch Reformed Church and he went with her. They came from a little town in Pennsylvania, Bedford, which is, what, used to be where the Lincoln Highway begins. Where is it now, though?

Female: Western, southwestern Pennsylvania, not too far from Maryland.

Chappelear: I have a picture of the house he grew up in. Would you like to see that?

Harden: I would. But while I'm still recording here, the one other thing that I wanted to get down, I wanted to get family names. Now, we have his name and your mother's name, and your brother is George Walter McCoy, Jr., and your full name?

Chappelear: Edith McCoy Chappelear.

Harden: You don't have another middle name?

Chappelear: I have a middle name, Levanda [sp.].

Harden: Levanda [sp].

Chappelear: Which I've spent my life trying to get rid of.

Harden: I see.

Female: And she'd get rid of Edith, too.

Chappelear: Right.

Harden: And tell me your husband's name.

Chappelear: John Chappelear.

Harden: John Chappelear. And your children.

Chappelear: I have two children, daughters, Susan Scramstad.

Harden: Susan Scramstad, S-c . . .

Chappelear: S-c-r-a-m-s-t-a-d.

Harden: Okay.

Chappelear: Son, John McCoy Chappelear.

Harden: All right. And your brother's family. His wife was . . .

Chappelear: Ruth McCoy.

Harden: Ruth, the middle. I'm sorry, maiden name?

Chappelear: T-h-u-m.

Harden: T-h-u-m McCoy.

Chappelear: And Mary Lou can tell you the children.

Female: Ruth Edith.

Harden: Ruth Edith McCoy was the eldest.

Female: Yeah. And then Mary Louise.

Harden: Mary Louise.

Female: And then George David.

Harden: George David.

Female: And Barbara Jane.

Harden: Barbara . . .

Female: Jane.

Harden: And you married . . .

Female: Donald Graff.

Harden: Craft.

Female: Graff.

Harden: Graff, G-r-a-f-f. Right.

Female: And my older sister married Arthur Crowley.

Harden: Crowley.

Female: David married Helena, Helaina [sp?].

Female: He's divorced from her, and then he married Susan Sherman.

Harden: Okay.

Harden: Okay. When this comes back for you to edit [N.B. unedited] we'll have a transcript, and then you can make sure that everything's spelled right.

Harden: Names are spelled correctly. We'll stop.

*End of Interview*